



SOTA
SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

 **YOUTH
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**

Member Handbook



www.nku.edu/yso

NKU YSO OVERVIEW

- MISSION:** The YSO is an extension of the Northern Kentucky University Music Preparatory Department, which believes that arts education is an essential and fundamental necessity. The YSO is dedicated to providing young musicians with an exceptional training environment and the ability, opportunity and knowledge to perform diverse orchestral literature.
- LOCATION:** Northern Kentucky University Fine Arts Building 1 Louie B Nunn Dr, Highland Heights, KY 41099
- CONTACTS:**
- Mr. James Ledbetter
YSO Conductor
ledbetterj2@nku.edu
- Mrs. Julie Grasso
YSO Manager
grassoj1@nku.edu
- Dr. Holly Attar
NKU Music Preparatory Director
attarh1@nku.edu
- REHEARSALS:** Tuesdays, 6:30–8:30 pm, FA 126
- TUITION:** \$325 per academic year
- PREREQUISITES:** Grades 7–12, suggested 4+ years playing experience, yearly entrance and placement audition is required. As a reference point, a level of playing equivalent to Suzuki Book III or beyond is recommended for string players. Winds, brass, and percussion: at least 2 years playing in a daily band program.



NKU Youth Symphony Orchestra Policies

Membership Requirements:

The conductor's goal is to make each rehearsal a meaningful experience for all involved. While performances often provide the most memorable highlights of the year, our rehearsals reveal whom we are as an ensemble – our musical maturity and dedication, our respect for one another, and our ability to work together intensively. Extraordinary responsibility is placed on each musician for preparation of individual parts. Both conductor and ensemble members are expected to diligently prepare for rehearsals and arrive ready to contribute at their highest level. It is very important that students and parents are familiar with and understand the policies set forth in this handbook. Failure to observe them could result in a reassignment of chair, denial of permission to participate in a concert or dismissal from the orchestra.

Tuition:

A non-refundable yearly tuition fee of \$325 will be charged to all members of the YSO. This tuition must be paid by September 1, 2019. Members may not participate until their tuition has been paid in full or financial arrangements have been made. Questions may be addressed by contacting the Music Prep office at 859-572-PREP (7737).

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory for all rehearsals and performances. Our attendance policies are strict to ensure the highest quality learning experience and performance. Please evaluate your schedule to be sure that you are able to meet the commitment to our ensemble that we expect. No more than three absences per year are allowed. Students can use these in any way they like, ie. sickness, school concerts or vacations. After three absences, the student may be dismissed.

Notification in advance of any absence or tardiness is expected, and should be made by submitting the online absence request form. This form can be found at musicprep.nku.edu/forms/absence.html (or under documents/forms on the website homepage. If the absence is an emergency you may email Mr. Ledbetter (ledbetterj2@nku.edu). Two (2) late arrivals are equivalent to one (1) absence. Attendance at a dress rehearsal is required for participation in a concert. It is at the discretion of the ensemble director to allow or not allow a student to participate in a concert based on rehearsal attendance and/or preparation.

Performance Absences:

Members are required to participate in all concerts. The conductor and Music Preparatory Department administration must approve any performance absence, unless the absence is due to sudden illness. Missing a performance is very serious, and doing so is grounds for probation or immediate dismissal from the program.

School Music Programs/Private Lesson Requirement

Participation in the NKU YSO is designed to enhance, not replace, school music instruction. School music programs provide essential daily ensemble and rehearsal instruction required for serious musical progress. Students who enroll in the NKU YSO are required to participate in their school orchestra/band on the same instrument, if one exists. If there is not a school band or orchestra program for the student to participate in, the student is required to take private lessons on the instrument that he or she plays in the YSO program. Our program is not designed to be a student's sole source of instrumental instruction. The YSO believes that school music programs are vital to the development of young musicians – educationally, artistically and socially. By participating in school music programs, young musicians can serve as role models, receive leadership training and share their talents with others. School programs also provide other important opportunities such as access to All-State Band/Orchestras, Solo and Ensemble Assessments and performing in school productions. When extenuating circumstances prevail which may prohibit or make students' participation difficult in their school music programs, a student may petition the conductor for an exemption.

Personal Injury or Damage to Instrument:

If a student sustains an injury that prevents him or her from playing an instrument, or if the instrument is being repaired, attendance is still required at rehearsals. It is beneficial to sit in the section while following along with the music, making any notations given by the conductor.

Punctuality:

Students must be in their seats and ready to play no less than five minutes before the start of each rehearsal. A call time will be specified for performances.

Equipment:

Each musician is responsible for maintaining his/her instrument in top performing condition. Oil, rosin, mutes, shoulder rests, extra reeds and strings should be brought to each rehearsal. Every musician is expected to come to rehearsal with a pencil and eraser. There will be many musical suggestions and modifications to the music through the course of every rehearsal.

Behavior:

YSO members are required to treat all rehearsal and performance venues and all equipment in the buildings with utmost care and respect. All members are required to behave appropriately while representing their orchestra. Disrespectful behavior of any kind during a concert or rehearsal may result in dismissal from the orchestra. All orchestra members are expected to maintain a professional manner at all times.

Rehearsal Etiquette:

All electronic devices must be silenced prior to rehearsal. Cell phones are not permitted on music stands and must be put away in purses or instrument cases during rehearsal, with the exception of break time. Students who are texting or otherwise engaged with their phones or other electronic devices during rehearsal time are subject to dismissal from the rehearsal.

Zero Tolerance Policy:

The YSO does not tolerate negative comments or behavior regarding race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious preference at any time. Such negative comments or behavior will result in immediate dismissal from the orchestra. The use of any illegal substances including tobacco, drugs and alcohol is also not permitted. Those in violation are subject to immediate dismissal from the YSO program.

Withdrawal or Dismissal from the YSO:

Members are expected to make a full season's commitment to the YSO. Early withdrawal from the program must be done by letter, indicating the reasons and circumstances for withdrawal. No refund of tuition will be extended.

Seating Audition Policies:

The purpose of seating auditions is to determine a seating arrangement that is for the good of the entire orchestra. The following are standardized policies that will be followed. Seating auditions will take place prior to the start of each season. All students must audition unless otherwise instructed. The YSO conductor, section coaches or other professional musicians will conduct auditions and their notes/comments are private and will not be shared with students or parents. Seating will then be determined at the conductor's discretion. Based on the audition, violinists will be assigned to the Violin I or Violin II section, and may remain in that section for the entire season. The conductor may determine exceptions to the preceding and assign students to rotate between the two sections. The conductor has the final say in all seating decisions. The goal for seating is not to foster competition, but to find the optimum placement for each student that will ensure the success of each individual and the group as a whole. All members of the orchestra may on occasion change seating as the conductor sees fit in order to benefit the entire ensemble. Principal players may change between semesters if more than one student demonstrates the necessary skills for a principal position.

Concert Dress:

Women

- * Black formal skirt below the knee or black dress pants
- * Black blouse (no sleeveless)
- * Natural or black hose
- * Black dress shoes

Men

- * Black dress trousers
- * Black dress shirt with collar
- * Black socks
- * Black dress shoes

Note: Any member who is not in compliance with the dress code, as determined by the conductor, he or she will not be permitted to participate in said performance.



PARENT/STUDENT CONTRACT

We, _____ (student name) and _____ (parent name) have read the contents of the YSO Handbook and consent to its enforcement. We recognize the responsibility made to the YSO and promise to follow through the the best of our abilities. In addition, we have cross-checked the YSO calendar dates (for the entire academic year) with our personal schedules, school band/orchestra schedules, Spring Breaks, sports schedules, and any other current commitments to ensure that YSO rehearsal and concert dates are a priority and will not be compromised. I have read the contents of the Orchestra Handbook and consent to its enforcement. My child recognizes his/her responsibility to the orchestra program and promises to follow through to the best of their ability.

Student Name (Print) _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print) _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell _____

This form is due at your audition

